

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented) A method of processing a call, the method comprising:

informing the customers of the telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique sets of prefix characteristics is normally, but not always, associated with one type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

assigning one of a plurality of unique multi-digit telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system within each area code of each local area and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device that is connected to the telecommunications system the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique sets of prefix characteristics plus said unique multi-digit telephone number to identify the specific communications device other than a land voice line to the other customers of the telecommunications system;

receiving a sequence of signals representing a specific set of prefix characteristics plus a specific unique multi-digit telephone number that has been dialed by a caller, the combination of the specific set of prefix characteristics plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifying the specific communications device that is the destination for said call; and

connecting said call to the specific communications device that is the destination for said call without necessarily determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed;

thereby providing about 7.92 million assignable combinations for landline voice communication devices within each area code, about 7.92 million assignable combinations for facsimile or second land line voice communications devices within each area code, and about 7.92 million assignable combinations for cellular telephone communication devices within each area code;

thereby at least about tripling the number of assignable combinations within each area code when compared to the number of assignable numbers available within an area code of a conventional telecommunications system;

thereby allowing at least about sixty-six percent fewer area codes to be used to serve local areas when compared to a conventional telecommunications system; and

thereby substantially eliminating the practice of requiring customers to dial ten digits to reach a communications device within a specific local area.

Claim 2 (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific set of prefix characteristics is the # symbol and the # symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 3 (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific set of prefix characteristics is the * symbol and * symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 4 (previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the specific set of prefix is a digit plus the * symbol and the * symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claims 5-9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (previously presented) A method of directing a call to a specific communications device, comprising:

announcing to the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique symbols is normally associated with a particular type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

assigning one of a plurality of unique telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique symbols plus said unique telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system; and

receiving a call having been initiated by a caller by dialing a combination comprising a specific unique symbol and a specific telephone number;

determining the destination indicated by the combination without determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed; and
routing the call to the specific communications device represented by the combination.

Claims 11 (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol is the pound key and the pound key plus said specific telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated fax machine.

Claim 12 (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol is the star key and star key plus said specific telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 13 (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol is a digit plus the star key and star key plus said specific telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claim 14 (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising directing the call to a cellular processing network if the specific unique symbol and the specific telephone number indicates that the call is being made to a specific cellular telephone.

Claim 15 (previously presented) A system for processing a call made to a telephone number and directed to a specific communications device to which that telephone number is assigned, the system comprising:

means for announcing to the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of suggested sets of prefix characteristics is normally associated with a single type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

means for assigning one of a plurality of common telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said suggested sets of prefix characteristics plus said common telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system;

a sequence of signals representing a specific set of prefix characteristics and a specific common telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the sequence of signals being a directory number for the specific communications device, the set of prefix characteristics immediately preceding the common telephone number, being distinguishable from said common telephone number and together with said common telephone number defining a destination for said call, each common telephone number having at least one destination; and

a routing apparatus having a switching component and an identification component for determining the intended destination of a the call without determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed and connecting the call to that destination.

Claims 16-23 (cancelled)

Claim 24 (amended currently) A routing system for directing calls to different communications devices having identical telephone numbers, said system comprising:

an administrative subsystem comprising means for informing the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of suggested symbols is normally associated with each type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system and means for assigning one of a plurality of unique telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said plurality of suggested symbols plus said unique telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system;

a network subsystem having routing apparatus including a switching component and an identification component for processing a call to a destination, the call including a sequence of signals indicating a set of prefix characteristics and a telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the destination being identified by the set of prefix characteristics, the sequence of signals being a directory number for the specific communications device; and

at least one communications device assigned to a telephone number;

wherein said the set of prefix characters does not indicate to said routing apparatus that the specific communications device is a particular type of communications device.

Claims 25-34 (cancelled)

Claim 35 (previously presented) In a telecommunications system in which at least some subscribers control a plurality of communications devices, a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising:

means for accepting a combination comprising a code and a common telephone number as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other telephone number; and

means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber;

wherein said code does not indicate to said means for routing that the specific communications device of the particular subscriber is a particular type of communications device.

Claim 36 (previously presented) The system of claim 35 wherein the means for accepting is selected from the group consisting of:

- a line telephone,
- a cellular or wireless telephone,
- a facsimile machine, and
- a pager.

Claim 37 (previously presented) The system of claim 35 wherein said code is selected from the group consisting of:

- a prefix that precedes an area code,
- a prefix that follows an area code,
- a suffix that precedes an area code, and
- a suffix that follows an area code.

Claim 38 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is the # symbol and the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 39 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is the * symbol and * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 40 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is a digit plus the * symbol and the digit plus the * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claim 41 (previously presented) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is a digit plus the # symbol and the digit plus the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific voice land line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 42 (new) In a telecommunications system, a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising:

means for assigning a common telephone number to the particular subscriber;

means for accepting a common telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being a first land line telephone;

means for accepting a combination comprising a code and the common telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other telephone number; and

means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber;

wherein said code does not necessarily indicate to said means for routing that the specific communications device of the particular subscriber is a particular type of communications device.

Claim 43 (new) The system of claim 42 wherein at least one communications device must be in service for each particular subscriber, said at least one communications device being selected from the group consisting of said first land line telephone, a facsimile machine and a cellular telephone.

Claim 44 (new) The system of claim 42 wherein the means for accepting is selected from the group consisting of:

- a land line telephone,
- a cellular or wireless telephone, and
- a facsimile machine.

Claim 45 (new) The system of claim 42, wherein said code is the # symbol and the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second land line telephone.

Claim 46 (new) The system of claim 42, wherein said code is the * symbol and * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 47 (new) The system of claim 42, wherein said code is a digit plus the # symbol and the digit plus the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific land line telephone or another facsimile machine.